

Our 25<sup>th</sup> Year

# PNC<sup>3</sup>



www.pnc3.org

# Coil Line

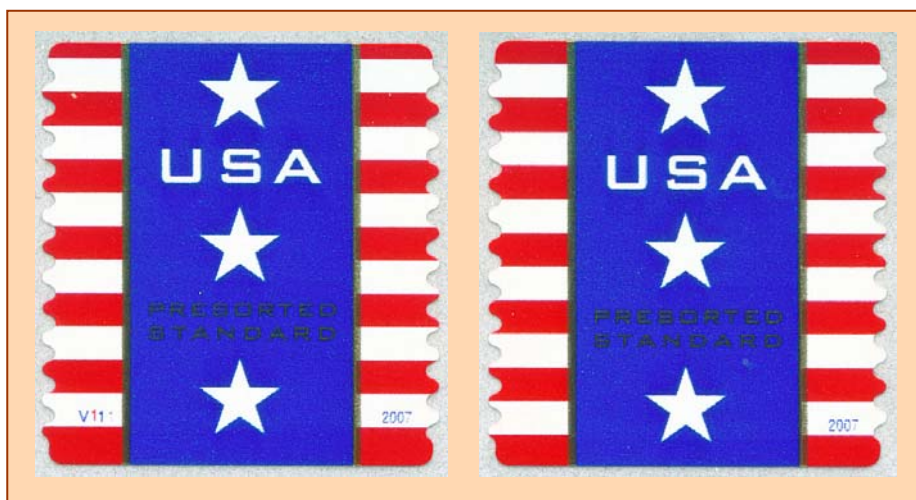
Journal of the PNC<sup>3</sup>  
**Plate Number Coil Collectors Club**

American Philatelic Society Affiliate # 185

Vol. 25, No. 9

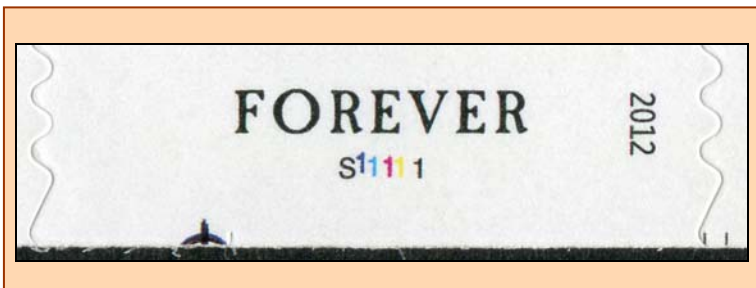
September 2012

Whole No. 291



▲ Red stripes thick and thin –  
One surprising cause “where and when”... *page 105*

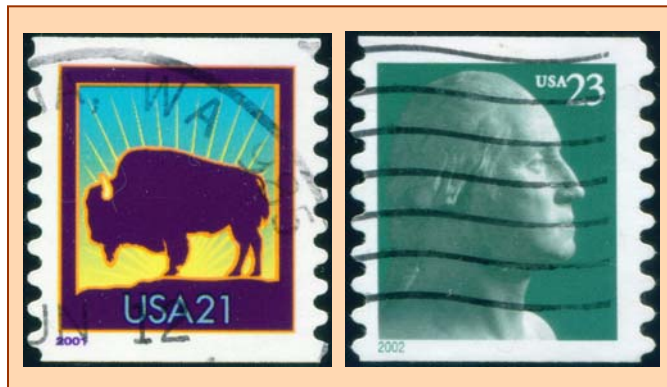
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# Coil Line

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All content matters, letters to the Editor, and advertising questions should be sent to **Coil Line**, c/o Ronald Blanks, PO Box 9282, Chesapeake, VA 23321. Phone 757-478-8719; email: [coillineeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:coillineeditor@yahoo.com). For mail delivery problems, contact the mailer below.

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## President's Message

*from the PNC<sup>3</sup> president ...*

In my July column, I asked for input from our members in regard to the PNC collecting category to be included in the next edition of the PNC<sup>3</sup> Catalog Values List. Each list includes values for used singles, mint plate strips of three and mint plate strips of five, plus one other category. The last two lists have included commercial covers as that additional category. In the past, we have included values for back numbers and precancel gaps. I asked members to respond indicating a preference for either covers, gaps, or back numbers.

The response to date has been underwhelming, I must say. A reply to [catalog@pnc3.org](mailto:catalog@pnc3.org) is the easiest way to make your preference known. Those who don't have e-mail can send me a note (use my address listed on the inside front cover) to state your choice.

I've been wondering why we've not heard from more of those who have purchased Values Lists in the past. Can it be that they only collect mint strips and used singles? Is there no real interest in back numbers, precancel gaps, or commercial covers? Or maybe we have too many members who think that their input isn't needed because others will carry the ball.

I suspect the latter might be the case. I certainly hope that we can change this attitude, since the reality is that we have far too few active members currently. It is imperative that more members become active in the next two years. We desperately need to fill our vacant committee chairs and groom the next generation of officers to keep the club running.

I've written before of the lack of viable candidates for club officer positions. I once again remind you that most of the current officers (those serving a second term by default as of September 1) are ineligible to serve another term.

Members must step up and prepare to take the reins going forward. If you can spare some time, don't wait until the last minute to come forward. We (the current officers) will work with you to give you the tools to do the job. Don't depend on someone else.

– Gene Trinks

## Welcome!

If you are a new reader, PNC<sup>3</sup> is in its 25<sup>th</sup> year. We are a community of stamp collectors specializing in the plate numbered coil issues of the USA. The first PNCs were issued in 1981 and, in February 1988, a network of PNC specialists established our club. *Coil Line* was launched in May, 1988 and serves (along with other club literature) to inform collectors on the many aspects of PNCs. Studies include scarce numbers, varieties, printing methods, market values, PNCs on mail, and more. Thank you for visiting, and we hope you'll join us!

## PNC<sup>3</sup> Regional Meetings

*(No meeting announcements received.)*

### Want to Sponsor a Regional Meeting?

Contact Tony Bruno for suggestions. He can put you in contact with others who have taken on the task. Several members have made it a regular habit of promoting meetings in their area.

#### Regional Meeting Chairman

Tony Bruno, PO Box 624, East Lyme, CT 06333-0624; email, [tbbee@aol.com](mailto:tbbee@aol.com)

(PNC<sup>3</sup> meeting notices in this column are free. Please submit details to the Editor 3 months before the meeting.)



**Plain 23¢ Washington coil (Scott 3617). Die cuts were so misaligned that row separators, and last two peak, valley shapes of row above, are revealed. (See related items in Readers' Forum.)**

## 25 Years Ago This Month

The September 1987 issue of *The Plate Number* (TPN, Vol. II, No. 5) featured on its front page a story by Ken Lawrence, "First Forged Plate Numbers Found." TPN was published by Steve Esrati bi-monthly and announced in that issue a paid circulation of 270 with total circulation of 300. Steve had organized the Plate Number Coil Study Group in 1984 as "a small but durable working collective with a closed, by-invitation-only membership to compile and exchange information on every aspect of PNC collecting" (Lawrence, 1990, p.129).

Evidently the forged-plate-numbers headline was accidentally shortened or just a plain mistake. The story concerned number 1s someone had added to two genuine First Day Covers of the 5.2¢ Sleigh phosphor-tagged coil in an effort to make them PNC FDCs. However, Ken noted elsewhere that the first counterfeit PNCs reported were several 18¢ Flag coils found in mixtures with fake single-digit 6s, 7s, or 8s added to make them look like PNCs. (Knowing that no #8 PNC had been issued, the mixture sorter rechecked the 6s and 7s he had also found, thus uncovering what appeared to be a forger's discarded practice efforts; *ibid.*, p.200.)

Also on the front page were leads of two more stories, "B Press Version of 12¢ Steamer is USPS Surprise" and "First Steps Are Taken to Form a PNC Society," both by Steve Esrati.

The former concerned the unannounced distribution for commercial usage of initial 12¢ Stanley Steamer rolls produced on the "B" press. (Prior production occurred on the older Cottrell presses which were scrapped in November 1985.) Of more interest now to readers is the latter story, some history into the formation of our present club as we approach our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It reads, in part, as:

Gene Trinks of Troy, Mich., has volunteered to coordinate the formation of a national organization for collectors of plate number coils.

If formed, the organization would be separate from the Plate Number Coil Study Group although most of the members of the latter would probably join the larger society.

At a meeting of the study group at STaMpsHOW in Boston, requests by collectors who had sought to join the study group were put up for discussion. Among the concerns expressed by those at the meeting was that (*please see page 110*)

## Editor's Message

I'm writing this on the eve of the PNC<sup>3</sup>'s annual meetings, this year in Sacramento, Calif. at the APS's StampShow, but I'm on the opposite coast. The point is that at least one reviewer and likely one of *Coil Line*'s two proofreaders will be attending the show when they receive this issue for review. We've had similar close "at-the-deadline" timing in several recent months, yet the subsequent publishing work and mailing (based on my print-copy monitoring) have not seemed to be hindered.

Someday I might share the delivery dates for the past year or so to the East Coast, but I don't know if they will tell us anything. Standard-class printed copies more often than not have received First-Class handling for over a year from New Mexico. Yet in recent months, some ordinary one-ounce letters have gone from two to three or four days' delivery from the central time zone (e.g., the Midwest) to Virginia.

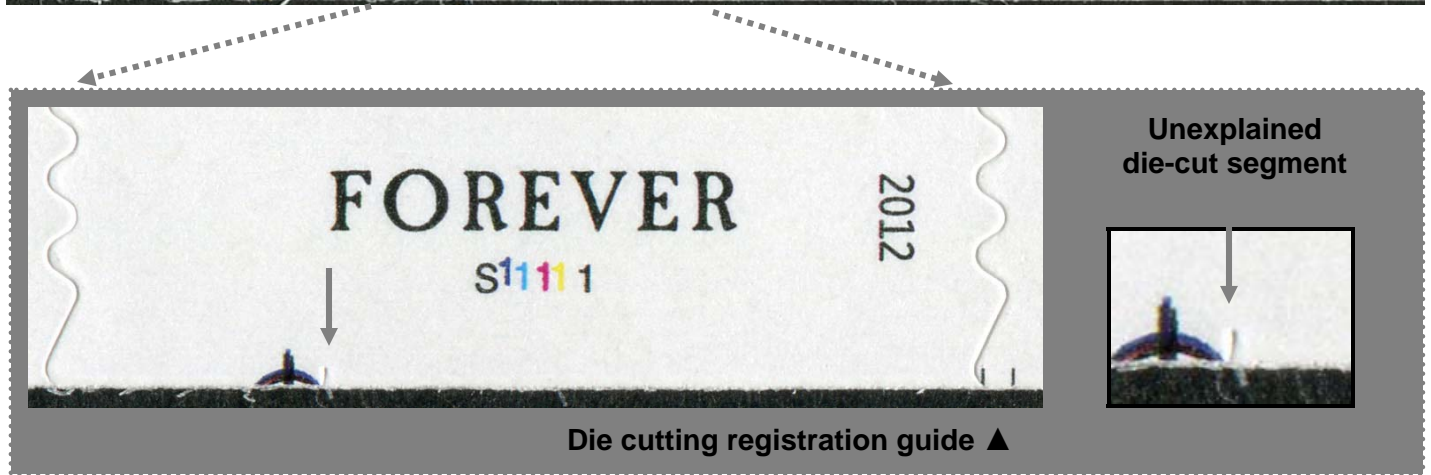
I don't know yet if this is because any postal plants actually did close (after all the news this past spring about some planned closings and then subsequent postponements). The facility closest to me, near downtown Norfolk serving the greater Hampton Roads area, was one of the ones scheduled to close in May (but didn't then), with Richmond taking over (100 miles away) when it does close.

Mentioning close scheduling near deadline, I will be away from the office this October during the "prime week" when much of the work each month editing *Coil Line* usually occurs. I've been away for a few days around this week a couple of times in the past three years, but still felt a sense of impending panic that proved groundless.

I've always had use of a laptop computer and access to the Internet at these times to work on *Coil Line* as if in my office, up to a point. But I worried that "Murphy's Law" would dictate that a significant PNC submission that could fill an unassigned space for the issue in-work might sit in the post office box, or I might decide a picture was needed of an item that sat in a covers stack or in a stockbook at home.

Being away from my office for eight days in early October is not the only issue; as of late August the pipeline of submitted material for *Coil Line* has nearly run dry. So, if you have a writing project or research close to completion, please consider finishing it soon. And for items that should be mailed in for inspection or to make images, mail them by September 29 to allow time to plan for possible use in the November issue. – Ron Blanks

# Readers' Forum



About the miscut Sennett (2012) Four Flags strip that Frank Covey showed in the August issue – the left two markings appear to be color registration markings, while the right-most marking (the two vertical dashes) is a die cutting registration guide. Also, notice the unexpected die-cut segment (noted by ↓) to the right of the middle marking – can anyone explain it? Now I just need to find a similar strip!  
 – Doug Iams #625

I've been going through some of my back issues of *Coil Line*, and came across your "Direct Mail Sightings" article (June 2012). You made mention of the Avery (10¢) Banner coils, and how the red stripe might be thicker or thinner on top or bottom. I have a number of PNC strips of five where the thickness of the red stripe changes because the die cutting of the stamps has been shifted. On all of the examples I have, the change (please see next page)



An interesting #V111 plate strip of five (closeup on next page)

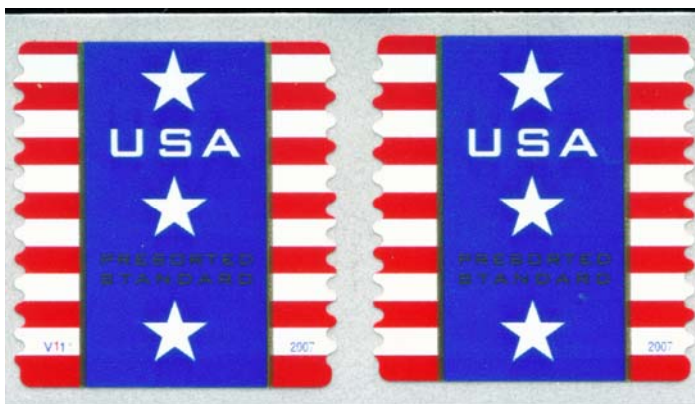
(from page 105, Readers' Forum)

occurs between positions 3 and 4 on these strips of five (the PNC and the next stamp at right).

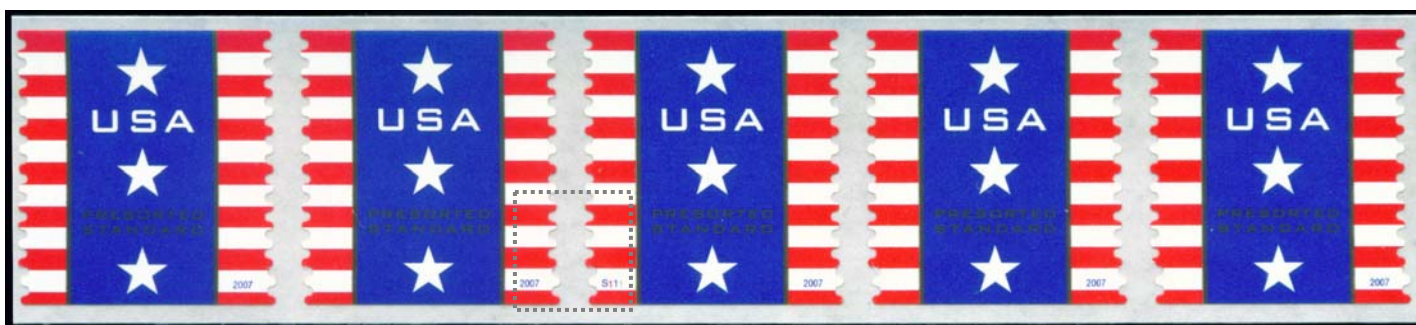
Here at this location (*closeup at right*), the thickness of the top red stripe changes from 1mm on the V111 PNC to 1.5mm on the next coil, with the opposite change occurring on the bottom red stripe.

Also, I've enclosed a Sennett (10¢) Banner strip where it appears that the die-cutting mats were misaligned (*shown below*). Believe it or not, I got these strips from "the Caves" in Kansas City (Stamp Fulfillment Services' underground facility).

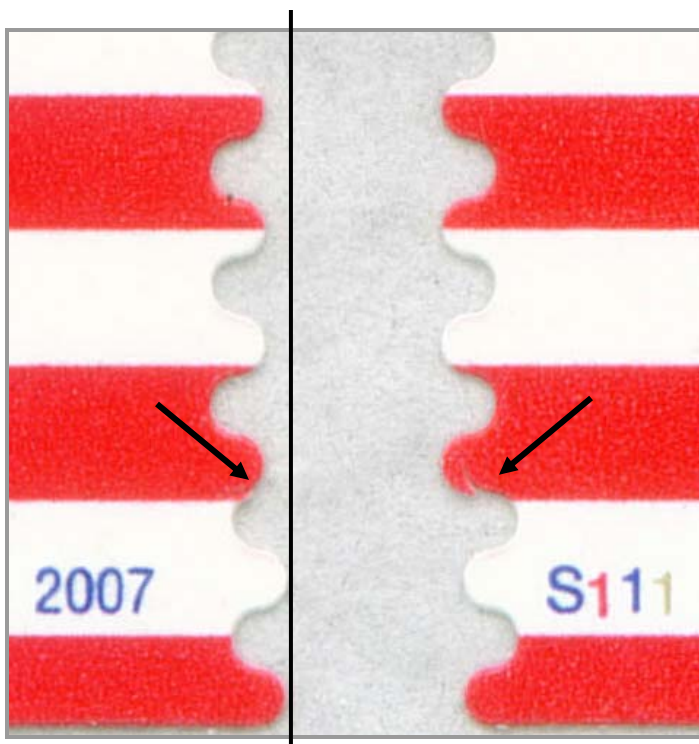
Thanks for doing such a fine job with *Coil Line*. It's my favorite stamp publication. – Ray Beer #1614



Die cutting to remove the "matrix" (excess paper around stamps, where gray liner now shows) was not well-registered for the PNC (left), but then shifted.



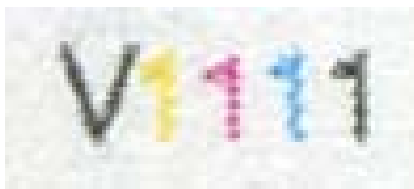
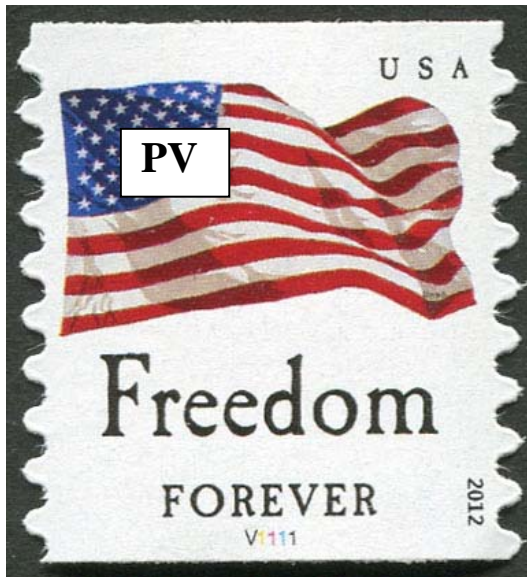
**Sennett-made (10¢) Banner plate strip of 5, with vertical die cutting offset near bottom corners.**  
(*closeup of boxed area shown below*)



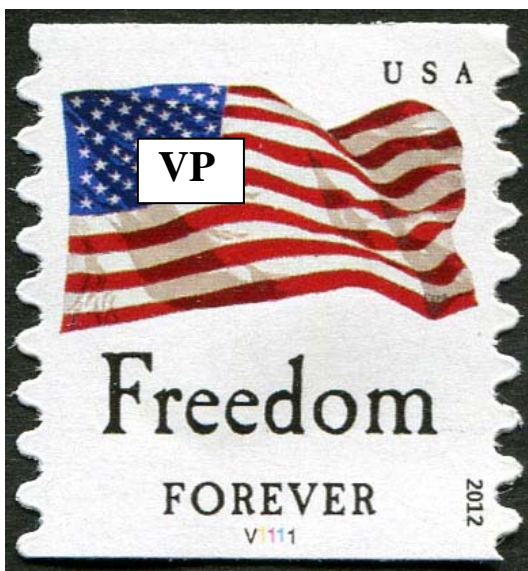
(Black line added to image to show shift. Note also slight die cutting overlap indicated by arrows.)

With a little time between chores recently, I stumbled upon an unsorted mix of used stamps and was surprised to find the 23¢ Washington shown below. It has a "2002" year date (not the earlier "2001" on coils that contract printer BCA made). Avery made rolls of these having various PNCs of some of the combinations between V11 and V46. While not a PNC, this coil also lacks a "peak-valley" die-cut pattern along its right side to match the usual "valley-peak" die cuts at left. (*please see page 109*)





**Four Flags (Forever) (AVR) (SA)  
Plate V1111  
PNC ID 2012-6**



The 2012-edition Forever stamps in coil rolls of 100 for the first-class domestic letter rate feature “Four Flags.” Four Flag rolls from Avery went on sale nationwide on February 22, 2012. Initial availability was limited to philatelic sales by USPS Stamp Fulfillment Services in Kansas City, MO. The value of each stamp in a roll of 100 is currently 45¢, the one-ounce first-class rate as of January 22.

The roll begins with the “Freedom” design followed by “Liberty,” “Equality,” and “Justice”. These four designs repeat throughout the roll. “USPS” is microprinted near the lower-right corner of the bottom white stripe on the flag in each design.

The V1111 plate number on the “Freedom” design shown to the left repeats every 20th stamp. The 2012 date displays vertically in the lower right corner.

Avery rolls of 100 are found with either a peak-valley (PV) or valley-peak (VP) die cut. Only about eight rolls out of 100 have the VP die cut. Both die cut varieties are shown at left.

While each roll is individually shrink-wrapped, five rolls are “chained” together. Each roll is secured by a paper wrapper (see below). The Current Plate Numbers, Roll Size chart lists 2012-6 with smooth-surface phosphor tagging (SP-S).



← **USPS microprinted near the right edge of the bottom white stripe of the flag.**



# Commercial Covers

by Rob Washburn

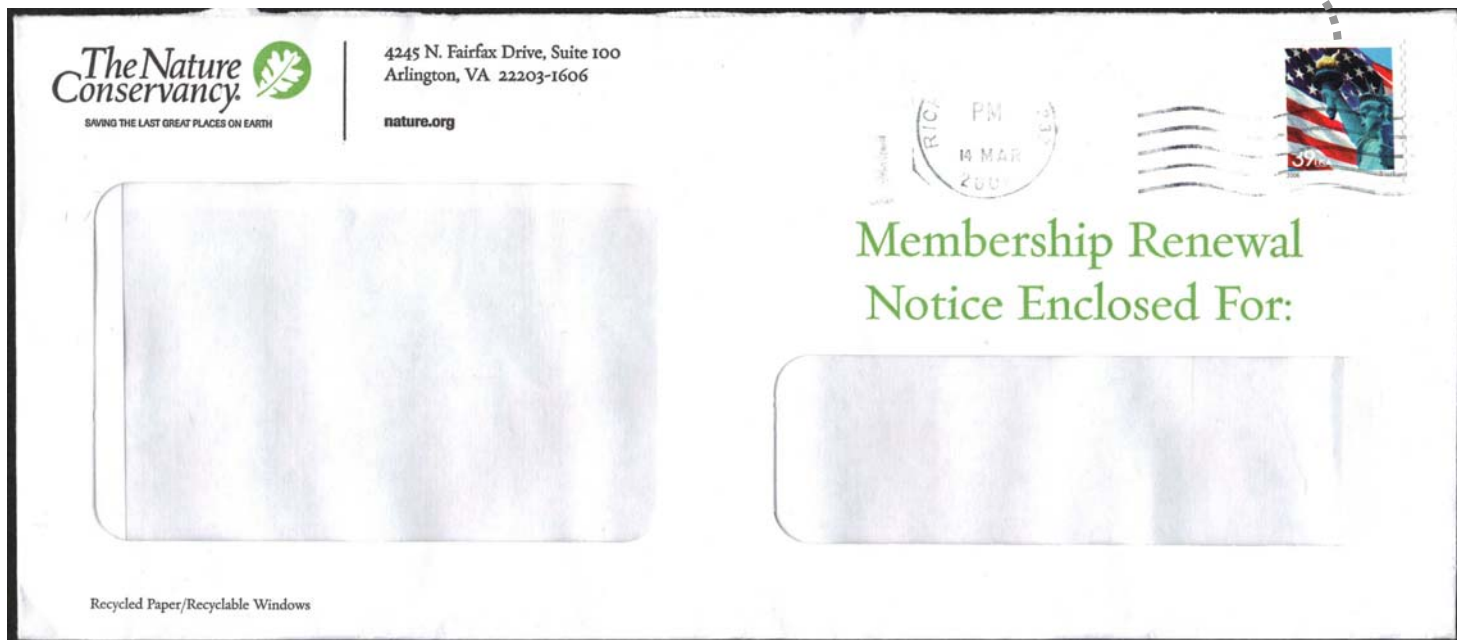
## Installment # 125

### 39¢ PNCs: Earliest Documented Usages

The U.S. Postal Service did not issue many different coils for the 39¢ first class rate primarily because it only lasted from January 8, 2006 until May 13, 2007. Here is a list “in progress” of earliest usage dates for PNC covers that traveled through the U.S. mailstream (*continues on next page*):

(39¢) Lady Liberty/Flag <b>WA</b> #S1111.....	12/29/05
(39¢) Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> #S1111 <b>p/v</b> .....	1/13/06
(39¢) Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> #S1111 <b>v/p</b> .....	12/28/05
(39¢) Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> #V1111 <b>p/v</b> .....	1/23/06
(39¢) Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> #V1111 <b>v/p</b> .....	12/19/05
(39¢) Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> #P1111.....	4/12/06
(39¢) Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> #P2222.....	1/9/06
39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag <b>WA</b> #S1111.....	3/14/06
39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> (round corners) #V1111..	1/3/06
39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> #P1111.....	5/22/06
39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> #S1111 <b>p/v</b> .....	7/10/06
39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> #S1111 <b>v/p</b> .....	7/14/06
39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> #V1111 <b>p/v</b> .....	9/7/06
39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag <b>SA</b> #V1111 <b>v/p</b> .....	11/1/06
39¢ American Crops #S1111 <b>p/v</b> .....	4/12/06
39¢ American Crops #S1111 <b>v/p</b> .....	5/2/06
39¢ Official #S111.....	?

**Key:** **WA** – water-activated gum  
**SA** – self-adhesive  
**p/v** – starts with a peak shape at upper left  
**v/p** – starts with a valley shape at upper left.

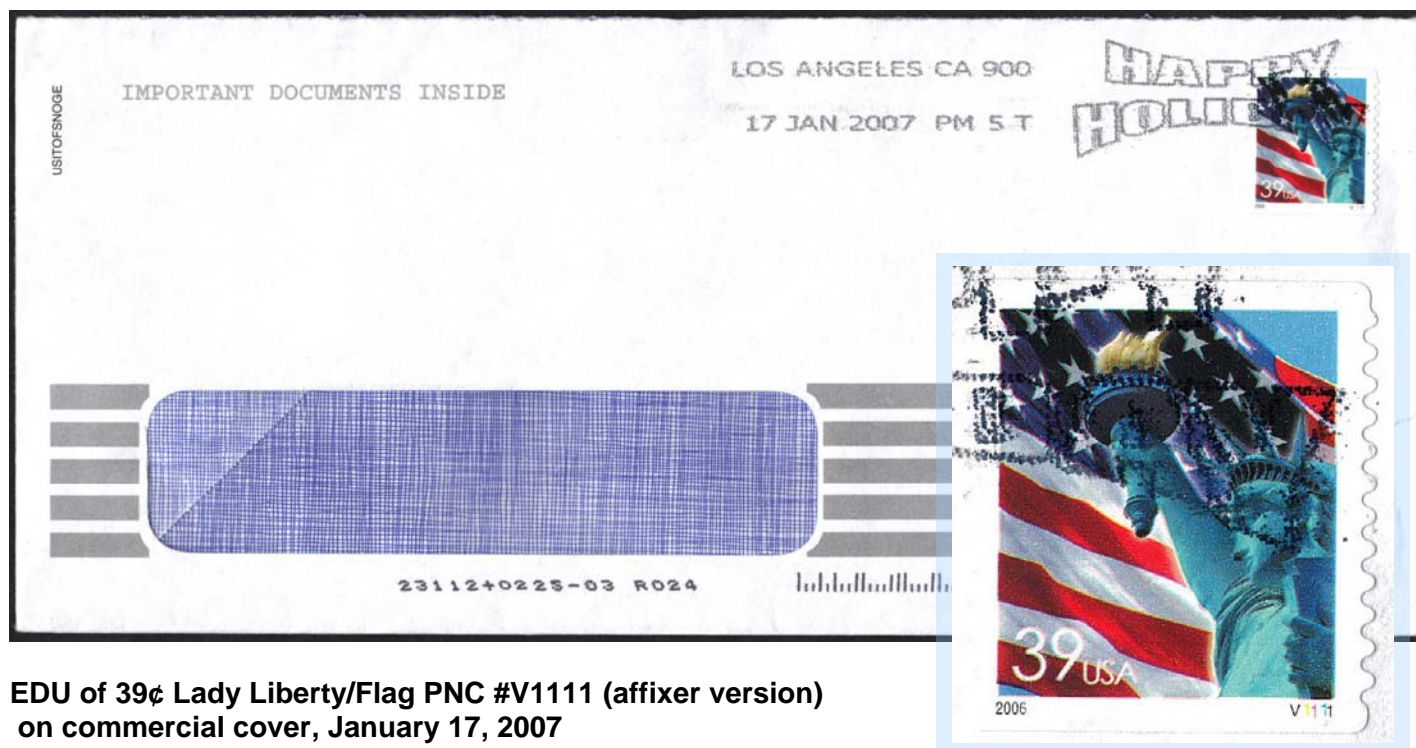


EDU of 39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag WA PNC #S1111 on commercial cover, March 14, 2006

(from previous page, *Commercial Covers Installment #125*)

The 39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag WA #S1111 appears to be one of the toughest 39¢ PNCs to find on cover, and the cover shown on the previous page is the earliest reported usage so far.

Based on collector reports, it appears the round-corners version of the 39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag #V1111 and the water-activated version of the (39¢) Lady Liberty/Flag #S1111 are also not that easy to find. Below is a cover using the round-corners version of the 39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag #V1111 with a Los Angeles, CA January 17, 2007 “Happy Holidays” cancel, more than 2 weeks after New Years Day.



**EDU of 39¢ Lady Liberty/Flag PNC #V1111 (affixer version) on commercial cover, January 17, 2007**

Please send me scans or photocopies of any earlier usages in your collections. My thanks to Robert Thompson for his reports. (This article is the fourth in a series on EDUs on the earlier first-class rate PNC covers of the present century: 34¢, 37¢, 39¢, 41¢, and 42¢. Next time, I will present the EDU dates reported so far of the 41¢ PNC issues. Please report your earliest usages of these issues on-cover to: Rob Washburn, P.O. Box 840, Skowhegan, ME 04976. Email: [stamps@beeline-online.net](mailto:stamps@beeline-online.net), phone: (207) 474-8021.)

(from page 106, *Readers' Forum*)

Frank Covey described what caused this result in the introduction to the “Dramatic Die Cut Shift Varieties” section of the PNC<sup>3</sup> Catalog Committee’s publication, *Avery Dennison Die Cut Varieties*: “When the die cutting mat is not aligned perpendicular to the web of paper being cut, the die cutting slowly shifts and then resets itself dramatically when the beginning of the die mat comes around again resulting in the dramatic die cut shifts seen...”

My 23¢ coil matches the image and caption of a 42¢ Nighttime Flag pictured there, described as a

“VP to Bell-Top” shift. The downward shift at right has revealed more of the row separator normally sliced across in half. Now it shows the bottom part of a peak that is normally the last shape seen at lower-right for the stamp in the row right above it.

If my recall is correct, the only other dramatic die cutting shift of a 23¢ Washington described in *Coil Line* was Doug Iams’ report of a similar pattern, except the revealed row separator shape at upper-right was a “knoll” type (December 2009, page 178, summarizing Doug’s August 2004 “This and That” report). Frank listed these two and other shift types for the Avery 44¢ Flag and 28¢ Polar Bear coils in four of *Coil Line*’s 2010 issues. (please see page 111)

## 100% # on Top Census

by Mark Schultz

Gather 'round, boys and girls, because I mean to tell you "I bin skooled" (again). Recall back in February's *Coil Line* when I alluded to the possibility that I would believe that a 20¢ Fire Pumper #2 100%-on-top existed *when pigs fly*? Well, the porcine elements of the universe have conspired against me and I present to you the PNC equivalent of nabbing the brass ring on the merry-go-round (this plate strip of two [PS2, *cropped in image below*], now in my personal collection). I hasten to add that since the February issue no other new Surreys or Fire Pumpers have surfaced in members' reports, so please keep hunting (and thank you).



I also have three exciting new finds to report; one from a dedicated used-single sorter, another from a PNC sleuth and... the last one, perhaps, a bit of a mystery where I will let you decide what to call it.

Member Dan Forgues pulled this 7.1¢ Tractor #1 (Scott 2127b, "5 Digit ZIP+4", *image on page 112*) from an eBay lot of 1800 "mostly used singles." This stamp has never been reported and I cannot find it anywhere in the literature of 100%-plate-#s-on-top. I think it is potentially unique, so for all of you used-singles sorters out there, gold is where you find it!

Member Conrad Keydel sent me a scan (*page 112*) of what he asserted is a **no-number** 5.5¢ Star Route Truck (Scott 2125). After checking Robert Thompson's *PNC Varieties* online pages, it appears (*please see page 112*)

(*from page 104, 25 Years Ago This Month*)

no groundwork for setting up a society had preceded the meeting.

Trinks offered to act as coordinator to help start up the society. Trinks made it plain that when the society is started he would not want to be its president.

After STaMpsHOW, Ursula Lescher of Somerset, N.J., volunteered to become treasurer of the society.

Among the issues to be resolved is that of a society journal. Steve Esrati, who chaired the meeting, offered to make *The Plate Number* available to members as part of their dues, but Michael Laurence, publisher and editor of *Linn's*, noted that it is somewhat irregular that a for-profit publication become a society organ.

Those who took the floor at the meeting expressed the thought that the coordinating group would have to lay the groundwork first, decide on a publication (if not *TPN*) and also decide what benefits would accrue to members.

At some point above, the story continued to page 60 under the heading there of "National PNC Society Needs Volunteers, Suggestions," closing with:

Anyone wishing to help form the PNC society or to offer suggestions is urged to contact Trinks at [old address given]. The consensus in Boston was that a society is needed. Now work must be done to get it going in time for STaMpsHOW88.

The 28-page September 1987 *TPN* issue also had a two-column page for "Letters to *TPN*." Six writers wrote a total of 38 lines, and the editor wrote five replies in 44 lines. More highlights from this journal are planned for a forthcoming issue of *Coil Line*. (Photocopied images of *TPN* issues are posted on the PNC<sup>3</sup> website.) **Reference:** Lawrence, Ken, *Linn's Plate Number Coil Handbook*, 1990.



**21¢ Bison PNC V1111 with normal die cuts, but row slicing mis-aligned slightly upward to reveal more row separator shapes at top corners.** (*See related Readers' Forum item.*)

## Classified Ads

**PNC used singles**, used strips, MNH PS5s. Great prices! Guaranteed quality! No hassles! Visit <http://www.angelfire.com/ca5/HimesPNCs> or send LSASE for lists to John Himes, PO Box 453, Cypress, CA 90630-0453. Please specify what you collect. Or e-mail [johnwhimes@yahoo.com](mailto:johnwhimes@yahoo.com). Member 957L

\* \* \*

*(from page 109, Readers' Forum)*

But has anyone seen other 23¢ examples or started a list of dramatic-shift types found for it? I revisited my meager sorted cache of used Scott 3617s (approximately seventy) in case I had overlooked one, but did not find anything except a mis-sorted example of PNC V11.

Recalling that this was one of Avery's first coils in rolls of 100, I pondered what was their *first*. Naturally this led to the 21¢ Bison, whose types of peak-valley and valley-peak shapes were the first ones to tell us what Avery might produce in rolls of 100. Alan Thomson ably reported on the Bison's die cutting in *Coil Line* (May 2001) and later in *The United States Specialist*. But I couldn't find any report of a dramatic shift for this issue, so I decided to look through my pile of used Bison coils, too. That turned up a "Shallow-valley to PV (peak-valley)" type, shown below. Does anyone have another type to report, or any of these shifts on a 21¢ or 23¢ PNC to show? – Ron Blanks #2119



**21¢ Bison with dramatic die cut shift (note normal valleys and peaks run at right side only).** *(Die cutting shifted downward at left side, revealing row separator shape; PNC on page 110 at lower-right, without this shift, shows matched shapes at top.)*

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*(No changes to report. Membership Count: 592)*

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(from page 110, 100% # on Top Update)

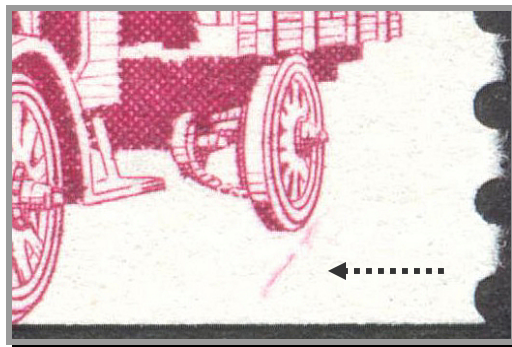


that the only location the “burned-rubber” plate scratch constant plate variety (CPV) is known to exist is at 2R (second stamp right of PNC position), as it is on Conrad’s PS5. Furthermore, since there is no plate # (dashed circle location), and the burned-rubber CPV is plain as day under the rear wheel at 2R (and the stamp measures the expected height of 24.5mm), Conrad’s strip confirms that the only place this CPV occurs is in the top row of the web (of 18 rows of the “B” press [BEP’s 701 press]).

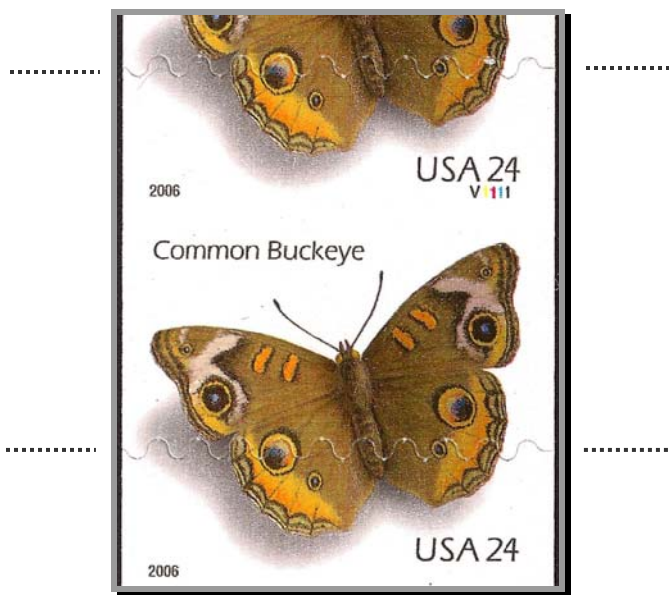
Excellent sleuthing by Conrad and this is a new finding for us all. (In case you were wondering, yes, I have been tracking no-# strips for the Census as well as the 100%-#-on-top since they are all varieties of the same row-slitting miscuts during coiling.)



Plate scratch, enlarged at top, next column ▲



The last offering is of a 24¢ Buckeye #V1111 (Scott 4002, image below). Some members to whom I have shown this strip have said immediately that it is a misperf (horizontal die cut) and dismissed it as a potential #-on-top. Admittedly, all other examples I have displayed in this column are due to miscuts, not misperfs. But this is the first case from a vertically oriented coil roll with a horizontal die cut (viewing the design normally) I have run across.



Permit me to point out that the plate # is clearly at the top of the stamp, it is printed on the same axis on which the stamp is printed, and these were the overriding qualifications stated at the beginning of the Census. But I will leave it up to you, PNC<sup>3</sup> members, to let me know your thoughts and reasons, yea or nay, and abide by them accordingly. I’ll report back in a future column.

Keep ‘em coming, folks, and please contact me with information and scans directed to: Mark Schultz, 1002 Wisteria Trail, Austin, TX 78753, [mschultz@jomarpress.com](mailto:mschultz@jomarpress.com).